

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:
Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) An automated method for recording sites accessed by a client in a communications network, the method including the steps of:
detecting submission of a search query from the client to one or more search engines; and
recording a search trail of one or more parameters of sites accessed consecutively following return of search query results to the client.
2. (Currently amended) ~~An~~The automated method ~~according to~~of claim 1, wherein the step of detecting submission of the search query includes:
detecting submission of a completed form object from the client;
determining if part of the form object matches a known search command format of any of the plurality of search engines.
3. (Currently amended) ~~An~~The automated method ~~according to~~of claim 2, wherein the search command format includes the network address of a search engine program for executing the search query.
4. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 3, wherein the search command format further includes one or more search parameters identifying a user-entered search query.
5. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of~~ claims 2 ~~to~~ 4, wherein the step of detecting submission of a completed form object by the client includes:
locating form objects in an object model of content served to a client; and
adding a routine to each form object to enable interception of the completed form object upon submission.

6. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 5, wherein the step of locating all form objects in a document object model of content served to a client is carried out after the content has been served to the client.

7. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 6, wherein the content is an HTML document, and all form objects in a document object model of the HTML document are located once a DocumentComplete event occurs.

8. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 7, wherein the HTML document includes a GET or a POST form.

9. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~claim 1, wherein the step of recording one or more parameters of the sites accessed consecutively from the search query results is optionally selectable at the client once a search query is detected.

10. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of the preceding claims~~claim 1, wherein the step of recording one or more parameters of the sites accessed consecutively from the search query results includes:

recording the network address of the consecutively accessed sites.

11. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 10, wherein the step of recording one or more parameters of the sites accessed consecutively from the search query results further includes:

recording one or more of a user identifier, the network address of a referring site, the network address of the client and search term or terms entered by the user at the client.

12. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~either one of claims 10 or 11~~, wherein the step of recording one or more parameters of the sites accessed consecutively from the search query results further includes:

transmitting the one or more parameters identified at the client to a trail recorder server for recordal.

13. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 12, and further including:

initially recording the one or more parameters in a RAM table at the trail recorder server.

14. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 13, and further including:

periodically saving RAM table data to disk-based tables at the trail recorder server.

15. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 14, wherein a first disk-based table stores data characterising each search trail.

16. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~either one of claims 14 or 15~~, wherein a second disk-based table stores data characterising the consecutive sites accessed in each search trail.

17. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims, wherein the number of consecutively accessed sites is limited to a predetermined maximum.

18. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims, and further including:
maintaining an adapter table of known search command formats for the plurality of search engines.

19. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 18, and further including:
periodically validating the search command formats maintained in the adapter table.

20. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~either one of claims 18 or 19~~, and further including:
automatically identifying a search command format of a new search engine; and
updating the adapter table.

21. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of claims 18 to 20~~, and further including:
collecting search information identifying a search box page of a search engine;

and

identifying the search command format from the search information.

22. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 21, wherein the step of collecting search information includes:

collecting the HTML code of the search box; and

parsing the HTML code to identify the search command format.

23. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of~~ claims 9 to 17, and further including:

matching the search query to previous search queries to identify related search trails.

24. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claims 23, wherein the step of matching the search query to previous search queries includes:

conducting a full text search on the search query and previous search queries.

25. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~either one of~~ claims 23 ~~or~~ 24, wherein the step of matching the search query to previous search queries includes:

limiting the related search trails to search trails resulting from search queries from a same user.

26. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~either one of~~ claims 23 ~~or~~ 24, wherein the related search trails include search trails resulting from search queries from a same user and other users.

27. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of ~~any one of~~ claims 23 to 26, and further including:

presenting the related search trails at the client.

28. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 27, wherein the step of presenting the related search trails includes:

ordering the related search results by one or more ranking criteria.

29. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to~~of claim 28, wherein the ranking criteria include any one or more of date, inverse document frequency match,

target search engine, user identifier, or trail weight indicative of the cumulative frequency of user visits to steps in a related search trail.

30. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to of claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims, wherein the communications network is the Internet, an intranet, an extranet or other network running client/server applications.

31. (Currently amended) ~~The~~An automated method ~~according to of claim 1~~any one of the preceding claims, wherein the one or more search engines are maintained on the client.

32. (Original) A system for recording sites accessed by a client in a communications network, the system including:

a search query detector for detecting submission of a search query from the client to one of a plurality of search engines; and

a search trail recorder for recording a search trail of one or more parameters of sites accessed consecutively following return of search query results to the client.

33. (Currently amended) ~~The~~A system ~~according to of claim 32~~, and further including:

an adapter manager for maintaining an adapter table of known search command formats for the plurality of search engines.

34. (Currently amended) ~~The~~A system ~~according to of either one of claims 32 or 33~~, and further including:

a trail searcher for matching the search query to previous search queries to identify related search trails.

35. (Currently amended) ~~The~~A system ~~according to of any one of claims 32 to 34~~, wherein the search query detector is a toolbar, browser add on or extension, deskbar, agent, proxy or like client-side application.

36. (Currently amended) A search query detector for use with a ~~the~~the system ~~according to of any one of claims 32 to 34~~.

37. (Currently amended) A search trail recorder for use with a ~~the~~the system ~~according to of any one of claims 32 to 34~~.

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38. (Currently amended) An adapter manger for use with a system ~~aeecording to~~of claim 33.

39. (Currently amended) A trail searcher for use with a system ~~aeecording to~~of claim 34.

40. (Currently amended) Computer software including program instructions for carrying out the method performed by the search query detector ~~and/or~~; search trail recorder, ~~adapter manager and/or trail searcher_~~aeecording to~~of~~ any one of claims 32 to 39.